

CLAIMS

1. A floor care appliance, comprising:

a base portion for contacting a floor surface and performing a cleaning operation thereon;

5 at least one electrically powered device producing work related to the cleaning operation;

a microprocessor for controlling said at least one electrically powered device; and

10 a port electronically connected to said microprocessor for connecting said floor care appliance directly to a personal computer through a digital pathway.

2. The floor care appliance of claim 1, wherein said digital pathway utilizes a protocol that is a member of the group consisting of RS-232, Universal Serial Bus, ethernet, Firewire, Blue Tooth, X10, infrared, and RS 485.

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3. The floor care appliance of claim 1, wherein said personal computer is connected to a remote computer.

4. The floor care appliance of claim 3, wherein said personal computer is connected to said remote computer via a member of the group consisting of a modem and computer network.

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5. The floor care appliance of claim 3, wherein said microprocessor is pre-programmed with an address for connecting to said remote computer.

6. A floor care appliance, comprising:

a base portion for contacting a floor surface and performing a cleaning operation thereon;

at least one electrically powered device producing work related to the cleaning operation;

a microprocessor for controlling said at least one electrically powered device; and

a port electronically connected to said microprocessor for connecting said floor care appliance directly to a personal computer through a wireless connection.

7. The floor care appliance of claim 1, wherein said wireless connection uses a wireless radio frequency.

8. The floor care appliance of claim 6, wherein said personal computer is connected to a remote computer.

9. The floor care appliance of claim 8, wherein said personal computer is connected to said remote computer via a member of the group consisting of a modem and computer network.

10. The floor care appliance of claim 8, wherein said microprocessor is pre-programmed with an address for connecting to said remote computer.

11. A vacuum cleaner, comprising:

a base portion for contacting a floor surface and performing a cleaning operation thereon;

at least one electrically powered device producing work related to the cleaning operation;

a microprocessor for controlling said at least one electrically powered device; and

a modem connected to said microprocessor for connecting said vacuum cleaner to a remote computer via a modem over a telephone network.

12. The vacuum cleaner of claim 11, further comprising:

a switch for initiating the connection of said modem to said telephone network for connecting said vacuum cleaner to said remote computer and the exchange of data between said microprocessor and said remote computer.

13. The vacuum cleaner of claim 10, wherein said microprocessor is pre-programmed with a telephone number of a remote computer connected to said telephone network.

14. A method of connecting a floor care appliance having a base portion for contacting a floor surface and performing a cleaning operation thereon and at least one electrically powered device producing work related to the cleaning operation to a personal computer, comprised of the steps of:

providing a microprocessor for controlling said at least one electrically

powered device;

connecting said microprocessor directly to a personal computer through a digital pathway; and

exchanging data between said microprocessor and said personal computer.

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15. The method of connecting a floor care appliance to a personal computer of claim 14, further comprised of the steps of:

providing a switch on said floor care appliance; and

pushing said switch to initiate the connection of said microprocessor to said

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personal computer through said digital pathway.

16. A method of connecting a floor care appliance having a base portion for contacting a floor surface and performing a cleaning operation thereon and at least one electrically powered device producing work related to the cleaning operation to a remote computer, comprised of the steps of:

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providing a microprocessor for controlling said at least one electrically powered device;

connecting said microprocessor directly to a personal computer through a digital pathway;

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exchanging data between said microprocessor and said personal computer.

connecting said personal computer to a remote computer; and

exchanging data between said personal computer and said remote computer.

17. The method of connecting a floor care appliance to a remote computer of claim 16,

further comprised of the steps of:

providing a switch on said floor care appliance; and

pushing said switch to initiate the connection of said microprocessor to said personal computer through said digital pathway.

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18. The method of connecting a floor care appliance to a remote computer of claim 16, further comprising the step of connecting said personal computer to a remote computer with a member of the group consisting of a modem and a computer network.

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19. The method of connecting a vacuum cleaner to a remote computer of claim 18, further comprised of the step of pre-programming said microprocessor with an address for connecting to said remote computer.

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20. A method of connecting a vacuum cleaner having a base portion for contacting a floor surface and performing a cleaning operation thereon and at least one electrically powered device producing work related to the cleaning operation to a remote computer, comprised of the steps of:

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providing a microprocessor for controlling said at least one electrically powered device;

providing a modem connected to said microprocessor;

connecting said modem to a telephone network;

connecting said telephone network to a remote computer; and

exchanging data between said microprocessor and said remote computer.

21. The method of connecting a vacuum cleaner to a remote computer of claim 20,
further comprised of the steps of:

providing a switch on said vacuum cleaner; and

pushing said switch to initiate the connection of said modem to said

5 telephone network to connect said microprocessor to said remote computer.

22. The method of connecting a vacuum cleaner to a remote computer of claim 21,
further comprised of the step of pre-programming said microprocessor with a
telephone number of said remote computer.

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